

THE WAY OF LIFE



THE
QUEST
OF
MOTHER
CHURCH'S
KNIGHT



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MOTHER CHURCH'S CHILD.

At the top of this page you see a very remarkable picture. The Old Enemy of mankind has got hold of a little new-born child. He hates its innocence and has thrown it into the dirty ditch of Original Sin. Aha, he says, that will stop baby from growing up clean and straight. But the White-robed Servant of Mother Church picks baby out of the ditch. He carries him to Mother Church's Basin of Washing—the Font. There he washes baby from the dirt and stains of Original Sin, and baby becomes Mother Church's Child.

But who is Mother Church? you ask. She is a very beautiful and very holy figure. Her hair is as white as snow, for it is nearly two thousand years since she was born. Her face is as young as a little child's, for she never grows old. On her head is a crown of spires pointing upward to the Throne of God. Her robe is blue as the sky for she is the same to all.

Our Mother the Church has never a child to honour above the rest,
She sings the same to the royal prince and the humblest babe
at the breast.

Her touch is as soft as a mother's kiss. Her voice is the voice of love.
Her house is a home where her children learn to walk in the light
above.

Look at the coloured picture opposite. There you see Mother Church with her little children all round her. Some, the boys at the back, are learning to sing

the songs of the City of God—those hymns which are so beautiful—those hymns you love to sing. Another party, in the middle, is learning to read the Book Beautiful—the Book of the Word of God. And the little ones in front are playing already with the letters which make the name of Mother Church—and that make a Name greater than hers, the holy Name of their Elder Brother, “Jesus.” All alike are Mother Church’s children—clever or stupid—rich or poor—strong or weak. All are hers because they were washed in the Font by which she stands.

When Mother Church’s children become big (seven years old) they have to start on the Way of Life. I cannot now tell all that they want for the Journey, but two things must be remembered. First, the Shoes of Obedience; as long as they are on your feet you cannot go off the Road. Second, the Silver Dove of Prayer; this is like one of those birds called “carrier pigeons.”

All the Young Christian has to do is to kneel down (as in this picture)—take the Silver Dove out of its basket—whisper a message to Elder Brother under its wing. And wish! at once the Dove has gone and returned with the most beautiful and loving answer you could wish for. So when you start on the Way you do not start without a friend.





Mother Church's Nursery.



The Way of Life.



THE RIGHT WAY.

Now let us look at the Way of Life. It is mapped out in the colour picture opposite—running straight as an arrow from the Font of Washing to the City of the Great King whose son (or daughter) you are. This Road is marked with mile-stones or “year-stones” every 365 day-marches, and you see the Young Christian pilgrim at the seventh of these Year-stones when he passes from the nursery of Mother Church to make his journey to the City. There you see a shrine of the Mother of our Elder Brother—a picture, I think, of Christ and his Church. Every seventh day-march there is a little House of Mother Church, where one of the clan of Bells lives and puts out his head as the Young Christians come up to it. He calls to them

Tinkle! tinkle! Come to duty;
Come to worship: come to food:
Here you get, to help you onward,
Strength beneath the Holy Rood.

And I hope every Sunday you will never forget to listen to Mr. Bell's call—that you will go lovingly, of your free-will, to Mother Church's House. For that House is the House of the Cross—the Rood—which is your standard of victory over Old Enemy.

The picture, of course, cannot show all the little Houses of Mother Church, but it shows you two big ones. In the first, called Confirmation Palace, you will receive your Knighthood at the hands of a Prince of Mother Church. [Over it is the Prince's crown or mitre and his shepherd's staff.] In the second, called the Banquet Hall of Elder Brother, you will receive for the first time the Holy Food which he gives you in his Body and his Blood. [Over it you see the Cup of Salvation with the Bread of Life.]

Of what happens in these two Houses I will speak in the next two chapters. Now I want you to look at that side track which leads down to darkness and death. You will notice that it is marked with a danger-signal. If you take off your Shoes of Obedience and stray down it, never forget there is a way back. If you look at the colour-picture again, you will see that there is a path by which you can climb back onto

the Right Way. There stands the Cross at the foot of which you must bow in sorrow, confessing that you have gone astray. And Mother Church will be there to receive you back. She will put on you the White Robe of Absolution—the Forgiveness of your sin—and you will be clean again as you were in the beginning.





KNIGHTHOOD.

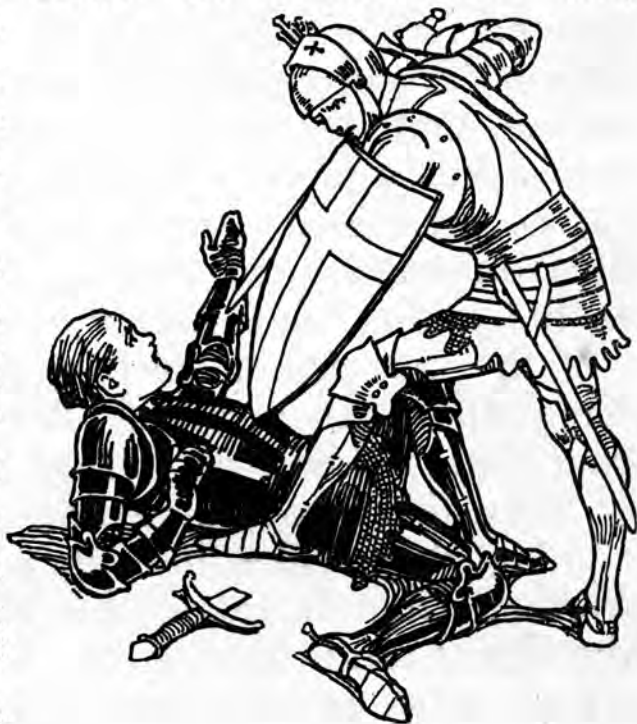
Now we come to the first of the great Houses of Mother Church by the side of the Right Way—Confirmation Palace, where you will receive your Knighthood. First, your armour is prepared—the Sword of the Spirit with which to fight—the Breast-plate of Righteousness which no dart of Old Enemy can pierce—the Girdle of Truth which binds all together—the Helmet of Salvation with its crest I H S (Jesus Saviour of Men)—the Leg-pieces of Getting-on with the work—the Shield of Faith on which is painted Elder Brother's Cross and yours. Your armour is all ready for you when you reach the palace, and you have to learn the meaning and the use of every piece. Then in prayer you give yourself to the service of the Great King. Like a Knight of old you watch your armour to be ready to put it on as his soldier and servant until your life's end.

In the colour picture opposite you see the Knighthood being given. An angel kneels beside the candidate holding his Shield of Faith and his Spear of Thrusting-through. Above hovers the Holy Spirit coming down like fire upon him. The Prince of Mother Church takes the Cross-handled Sword of the Spirit and lays it on his shoulder. The new Knight rises up and puts on his Helmet of Salvation,

ready to go forth and battle for his Master's conquest of the world. That is what your Confirmation will mean to you, I hope, when you kneel before the Prince of Mother Church—when you are confirmed in your holy calling, to be Christ's soldier and servant unto your life's end.

You will have many a battle to fight, but none harder than that which is illustrated on the next page. The picture there shows a Knight, in the white armour of the Great King, who has fought and overcome a Black Knight. The Black Knight met him (as he will meet you) and tried to turn him from the Way. A long and fearful fight followed—renewed again and again as the White Knight tried to put the Black Knight behind him. Great dints were made in the Shield of Faith, but as long as the White Knight held it out in front of him no stroke, however hard, could reach him. At last, after many a battle, he got the Black Knight down. He tore off his helmet to thrust his sword into his throat. And behold! the face that looked at him was his own. He had fought and overcome himself!

You also will meet your Black Knight. You will have to fight and overcome yourself. Put on the whole armour of God ready for that fight.





The Making of a Knight.



Elder Brother and His Knights.



ELDER BROTHER.

The second great House of Mother Church in the picture of the Right Way is called the Banquet Hall of Elder Brother. At Confirmation Palace you receive your Knighthood. In the Banquet Hall you feast on angels' food, the gift of Elder Brother himself who comes to you there. You are one with him and he with you.

At the top of this page is a picture of the first time Elder Brother gave this food to his brothers, the Twelve Apostles. He took the Bread and brake it. He took the Cup and blessed it. And he gave that Food to them, telling them always to do the same "in Remembrance of me." Then wicked men led him away and nailed him to the Cross. But still to the Twelve he was with them in that Holy Communion. And still to his faithful soldiers and servants—his Knights—he is with us always even unto the end of the world.

Look at the colour picture opposite. There you see Elder Brother coming to meet his Knights (yes and his ladies too) in the Banquet Hall. Embroidered on the robe he wears are the Cup and the Bread, which are his Blood and his Body. He comes to them and they to him. With what love he looks on them!

His hands are stretched out to gather them to himself—those hands in which are the holes made by the nails that fastened him to the Cross. And with love should not his Knights look up to him? He sent the White-robed Servant of Mother Church to take them out of Old Enemy's clutches and to wash them clean. He taught Mother Church how to get them ready to start upon the Way. He bade the Prince of Mother Church to dub them his true Knights.

For the rest of the Way, therefore, you need never feel alone and weak. All you have to do is to enter one of the wayside Houses of Mother Church when you are weary and sad. There in its Banquet Hall you will pierce through the veil of flesh. Elder Brother is there. He has come to you with arms outstretched—to give you food and new strength for the battle which is his. You are his Knight and he will not leave you comfortless. He is with you to the end.



Very briefly I have told you of the Journey of Life. Your feet have been placed on the Way. See that they never go off it! You will find plenty of temptations. Old Enemy will try to make you stray. But stick to the Way and at last you will reach the Steps of Heaven, and God's Messengers will sing you home.

